

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 INR-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 L-01 PRS-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 /037 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

INFO GOV PANCANAL

USCINCSO

S E C R E T STATE 125367

LIMDIS FROM MINISTER BELL AND GENERAL DOLVIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

1. FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE PANAMA REVIEW COMMITTEE PRINCIPALS, THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS INITIATED A NEW TACTIC IN CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA MAY 20-21.

2. DURING THE MAY ROUND PANAMA TOOK THE POSITION, WHETHER AS A NEGOTIATING PLOY OR AS A REFLECTION OF A FIRM DECISION, THAT IT CANNOT CONSIDER A TREATY DURATION PERIOD FOR BOTH CANAL OPERATION AND CANAL DEFENSE EXTENDING BEYOND 2000.

3. PANAMA ASKED THE UNITED STATES WHAT SET OF CONCESSIONS  
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IT COULD OFFER IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO CON-

SIDER FAVORABLY SUCH A DURATION, AND IMPLIED THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO BE CONCESSIONARY.

4. THE UNITED STATES REPLIED THAT IT COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF A SET OF CONCESSIONS WHICH PANAMA COULD MAKE, AS A PRACTICAL POLITICAL MATTER, WHICH COULD LEAD THE UNITED STATES TO CONSIDER FAVORABLY PANAMA'S POSITION ON DURATION. THAT, INDEED, WHILE NO ISSUE IS NONNEGOTIABLE, IT WAS VIRTUALLY

IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS TO CONCEIVE OF AN AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA BASED ON THE YEAR 2000. AND THAT IF PANAMA WISHED THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS TO EXPLORE THE DURATION ISSUE FURTHER THAN IT HAD ALREADY BEEN EXPLORED, PANAMA WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH SOME IDEAS OF ITS OWN.

5. OUR PURPOSE WAS TO PORTRAY TO PANAMA THE CONSIDERABLE FIRMNESS OF THE U.S. POSITION ON DURATION AND TO TRY TO DISCOVER HOW FAR PANAMA MIGHT BE WILLING TO GO IN THE WAY OF CONCESSIONS ON ISSUES OTHER THAN DURATION.

6. IN THE CONVERSATIONS WITH GONZALEZ-REVILLA, THE NEGOTIATORS REITERATED THE U.S. REPLY GIVEN EARLIER IN MAY, AND INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO APPROACH FUTURE NEGOTIATING TALKS WITH ANY MORE FLEXIBILITY THAN IT HAD DEMONSTRATED IN THE DECEMBER AND FEBRUARY ROUNDS IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW PANAMANIAN PROPOSALS. THAT IT WOULD NOT BE WORTHWHILE FOR THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS SIMPLY TO REITERATE WHAT THEY HAD ALREADY PLACED ON THE TABLE (ON A "WHAT-IF?" BASIS), PARTICULARLY SINCE PANAMA HAD ALREADY SAID IT WAS NOT INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE U.S. PROPOSALS ON DURATION FURTHER AT THIS TIME.

7. GONZALEZ-REVILLA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, AND WOULD BE TRAVELING TO PANAMA SHORTLY TO EXPLAIN THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS' POSTURE ON FUTURE TALKS.

8. THE RESPONSIBILITY NOW RESTS SQUARELY ON PANAMA FOR ADDITIONAL SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. ROBINSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, CANALS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 MAY 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** powellba  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE125367  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** SMOREYBELL:VV  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760198-0026  
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**Line Count:** 99  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN ARA  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** powellba  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 JUL 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <02 NOV 2004 by powellba>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PN, US  
**To:** PANAMA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006